

THE
CHURCH of *England*
VINDICATED:
AND
SEPARATION
FROM HER
COMMUNION

Shew'd to be

Causless and Schismatical.

In Answer to Mr. Owen's Plain Dealing,
and its *Vindication*. K.


Qui loquacitatem facundiam existimet, & impudentiam constantiam deputet, & maleficere singulis officium bonae conscientiae judicet. Tertul. contra Hermog.

L O N D O N:

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THE PREFACE.

 *HAT Mr. Owen's Plain Dealing has not before this Time merited a full Answer, is, I believe, chiefly owing to the mean Opinion which the Neighbouring Clergy have conceived of him, and that notable Performance; and because the Pleas there made use of in Defence of Separation, have been examined and confuted over and over again, by Divines of greatest Note and Learning.*

But, in my weak Judgment, these Reasons are not sufficient to decline a publick Answer; for besides that many honest well-meaning Churchmen are discouraged to hear so many daring Challenges, repeated with great Ostentation by Mr. Owen and his bigotted Adherents; and some of our own Friends begin to suspect us of Cowardice, and Fear of disobliging those who pretend to great Favour and

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Interest with the present Government : I cannot think Mr. Owen so despicable a Person as some would represent him ; for how little soever he may appear in the sight of the most judicious discerning Persons, he is the most celebrated Champion, or rather Bully of the Party, in this Neighbourhood ; his Book has bore five or six Impressions, and is still cried up as unanswerable ; and what is more, has obtain'd the Favour of a Noli Prosequi.

It is true, his Objections against the Communion of the Church of England were answered before he publish'd them ; and I can do little more than repeat, in other Words, what has been better expressed by many others before me. But it is to be feared the greatest Part of Churchmen are not acquainted with those excellent Discourses, or may think them too dear to be purchased, or too large to be perused by them ; and may reasonably expect that they should be enabled to defend the Church with as little Trouble and Expence, as its Adversaries are to oppose it.

Nothing but an honest Zeal for the Church of England has prompted me to this Undertaking : I wish some Person better qualified, or more strictly obliged, would have vouchsafed to take this Trouble off my Hands, and employ'd their greater Leisure and Abilities against this active Adversary of the Establishment.

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Church; which if it should happen to suffer in its Reputation thro' the Weakness of its Advocate, it is their Fault, who, being more capable, have disdain'd to enter the Lists with such an Ignoble Antagonist.

I do not think my self concern'd to take the least Notice of those Mountebank Airs which Mr. Owen usually gives himself, to the great Diversion of his Readers, or of those dirty Reflections which he scatters at random in his Writings: I do assure him I am much more ambitious of imitating the Example of our Saviour, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, than to gain the Reputation of the most Sacraistical Wit.

It may be expected that I should give some Account of the Indictment which Mr. Owen complains of in his last Preface: Which I shall do according to the best Information I could get of it. The Judge having recommended to the Gentlemen of the Grand-Inquest to enquire after the Authors of scandalous Pamphlets, that reflected upon the Government, or the Clergy and the Church of England by Law Establish'd; they, upon sufficient Evidence, unanimously found the Bill against Mr. Owen: Which in the Opinion of these and of many other Gentlemen of the best Quality, and of undoubted Affection to his Majesty King George, (as the worthy Foreman of that Grand-

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Grand-Jury in particular shew'd himself to be in a remarkable Manner, by appearing afterwards at the Head of the Militia against the Rebels) was esteemed a proper Way of answering him. This Legal Method of Proceeding was thought to be the more Necessary in Mr. Owen's Case, because he had, about the Time of the QUEEN's Death, publish'd to the World in * his *Donatus Redivivus*, that after Her Majesty's Decease, The British Crown was to descend to a German Presbyterian, and his Issue, Pag. 30. It was easy to observe, that nothing alienated the Subjects Affections more, than such scandalous Surmises industriously propagated at this Time, as if his Majesty was in Principle a Friend to Presbytery, &c. What greater Service could those honest Gentlemen do the Government, than to bring the Authors of such vile Insinuations to condign Punishment, and to convince the World, that the present Government was resolved to protect the Establish'd Church, by a due Execution of the Laws made for that Purpose? Mr. Owen was sure to have a fair Tryal, and if he were not conscious to himself of having committed an Offence against the Law, what Need was

* He calls it his in *Plain Dealing*, p. 38.

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ere for him to procure a Warrant to stop all proceedings against him on that Account?

I have a very reasonable Request from Mr. Owen in behalf of his Readers, that, when he makes a Quotation, he would refer to the Page, as well as Author, to save them the Trouble of reading a whole Volume in search of a Scrap, which perhaps they may not find at last; and another in behalf of the Government, that he would not accuse those of Disaffection, who cannot agree with him in his Notions of Religion, insinuating thereby to the manifest Prejudice of the Publick Tranquillity, that no Man, that is truly Zealous for the Church of England, can be a Friend to the Protestant Succession: For which he deserves ample Thanks from the Jacobites, but none surely from any discreet Well-Wisher to the present Establishment.

I quote the first Edition of Plain Dealing; having no other by me; I have considered the Vindication, as it falls in my way, only this Book being chiefly design'd for an Answer to Plain Dealing. There is a great deal of Reason to conclude Mr. Owen to be Author of both, from the Congruity of Style, the Lightness, Vanity, and Scurrility of Expression in both of them, by which Mr. Owen has chiefly made himself Notorious, and his Care to correct and disperse them.

To

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To supply the Defects of this short Answer, I have referr'd to the most Eminent Writers of the Church of England, whose Objections are more largely confuted, and the Duty of Communicating with the Etablish'd Church fully proved: Since Mr. Owen has express'd so much Contempt of Curates, it would be an Honour for him to confute those Learned Divines; much more for his Reputation, than to muster up old Objections without taking the least Notice of the Publick Answers, which they have made to them: Let him try his Skill with Mr. Bennet's Abridgment of London Cases, and his Paraphrase on the Liturgy: Let him confute them only, and I'll own his Plain Dealing unanswerable.



T H E

THE
Church of England
VINDICATED, &c.

THAT we may not mistake the Design of Plain Dealing, Mr. Owen, in the Preface tells us, it is to justify the modern Protestants, Dissenters, who are found in the Faith, tho' in the Body of the Book, he usually mentions the Presbyterians only.

Whereby he plainly intimates, that he designed his Book to be a Vindication of other Dissenters besides Presbyterians. These English Protestant Dissenters (says Page 7.) agree with the Established Church, in all the Essentials of our Religion, and Circumstances, and Acts of Worship, as far as they are agreeable to the Word of God. Now this can be truly said by a Presbyterian, of English Protestant Dissenters in general, of any, besides those of their own Sect, is what I cannot apprehend; neither ought Mr. Owen to have taken that for granted, and to lay it down for a *Postulatum*, which is the main Thing in Debate betwixt us; i. e. Whether the Church of England enjoins any thing, as an Essential of Religion, Circumstance, or Act of Worship, which is not agreeable to the Word of God.

Page 8. In order to his clearing Dissenters from the Guilt of Schism, he ranks them under two Heads. 1st, Such as were never Members of the Church of England; 2dly, Such as were once Members, but are supposed afterwards

afterwards to have left her Communion: As to the First, he maintains they are not Schismatics, who cannot properly be said to separate from the Church, having never been united to her.

But it is to be consider'd, that every Christian is obliged to live in Communion with the Catholick Church, by joining with that sound Part of it which is settled in the Place of his Nativity: Otherwise any Number of Persons might set up an Independent Church when they pleased, which would be destructive of the Unity of the Catholick Church. He that would see this largely proved, may consult Dr. *Sherlock* upon Church-Communion, and his Defence amongst the *London Cases*, or Mr. *Bennet's* Abridgment. As they who join in a Rebellion started before they were born, are properly call'd Rebels, as well as the first Authors of it, tho' they never owned or paid any Obedience to their Lawful Prince; so they, who keep up a causeless Separation, of never so long standing, are Schismatics, as well as the first Revolters from the Unity of the Church. I shall confirm this with one or two notorious Instances. There was a Schism betwixt the *Jews* and *Samaritans* in our Saviour's Time, and the latter were undoubtedly Schismatics, tho' some of them were never actual Members of the Church of *Jerusalem*, that Schism being begun by their Ancestors, some hundred Years before. The *Donatists* in *S. Austin's* Time were Schismatics, tho' many of them had never held Communion with the Catholicks, but only kept up a Separation first made by their Ancestors many Years before. I mention these Instances only to shew that a Man may be a Schismatick, who never join'd in Communion with the Church.

Those Dissenters therefore who were never Members of the Church of *England*, are Schismatics, unless they can be justified by the same Reasons, whereby he endeavours in the 2d place to prove it lawful for those who were once Members of the Church of *England* to have separated from her. To this end he lays down this Proposition, as the Foundation of his following Discourse.

Those

Those who were once Members of a true Church, may lawfully separate from her, when she imposes unwarrantable Terms of Communion.

A Term of Communion is something to be professed or performed by any Person, as a Condition of his being admitted to Communion, which, if he refuses, he shall not be allow'd to join in the publick Offices of Religion with the Members of a Church that imposes it with so much Rigour. What this Author means by *unwarrantable Terms of Communion*, is not so easy to determine. Had he said *Sinful Terms*, understanding thereby something sinful in itself, or a great Hindrance to Piety, which every Member of a Church is bound to observe, as the Condition of his being admitted to Communion with her, we should not quarrel with this Position, for it is undoubtedly true, that no Man can be obliged to Sin: But if by *unwarrantable Terms of Communion*, he means only something unwarrantable with respect to the Governors of the Church, as suppose they should enjoin something frivolous or unedifying; tho' this might be reckon'd an unwarrantable Abuse of Power, for which they are accountable to God; yet a Member of a true Church ought not to depart from her Communion on such account only: Obedience to those who *have the Rule* over us, and *watch for our Souls*, and Communion amongst Christians in the publick Offices of Religion, are indispensable Duties, and nothing under a Necessity of Sinning can justify a Disturbance of the Peace and Unity of the Church. It is for this Reason that the Church of England separated from the Church of Rome, because she casts out of her Communion such as will not own her Infallibility, Transubstantiation, and other Errors of Faith; nor adore the Host, pray to Saints and Angels, which are idolatrous and sinful Practices: If it can be prov'd that Dissenters cannot join in the publick Offices of our Church without a sinful Compliance with some unlawful Impositions, their Separation is so far lawful.

Page 9. Thus far we agree, that if the Terms of Communion any Church imposes upon its Members can be proved in themselves unlawful, a Nonconformity to such Terms is

a Duty, and consequently a Separation from such a Church is justifiable. He adds, *or appear so to them*; this is not to be allowed, unless they make a diligent and impartial Enquiry into their Lawfulness, and after all remain unsatisfied: In which Case, if their Pretence for Separation be not just, if the Term of Communion, which they dislike, be lawful, tho' they cannot help believing the contrary, their Schism is to be reckon'd amongst the Sins of Ignorance; and there is reasonable Hope of their Pardon and Salvation, as well as of many of the Church of Rome, who could never discover their Errors and sinful Practices: But if their Ignorance be the Effect of Pride, Obstinacy, or Laziness, they will be accountable to God for such Errors or Neglects of Duty, as proceed from it.

Let us enquire, in the next place, how he proves that the Church of England imposes unlawful Terms of Communion. It is certainly true, as this Author affirms, *when a Church obliges its Members to prefer humane Inventions to divine Institutions, those Impositions are sinful*, P. 9, 10; and we may lawfully refuse our Compliance therewith. By preferring them to divine Institutions, may be understood, either esteeming them of greater Value or Necessity, or preferring them in our Practice when they happen to interfere with one another: This the Jews in our Saviour's Time were notoriously guilty of, *Matth. xv. 4. &c.* when they preferred a Law of their own Invention or Tradition that thwarted with a plain Commandment. The Church of Rome is also guilty of preferring humane Inventions to a divine Institution, when she teaches Fornication to be a less Sin, than Marriage in a Clergyman. The Question at present is, whether the Church of England in like manner prefers humane Institutions to divine Ordinances. This Author ought to have proved something more to make good his Proposal, namely. That the Church of England not only prefers such Impositions to the Institutions of God, but also that she makes the consent of her Members to such Impositions being preferable to God's Commands, a Term or Condition of their communicating with her.

For tho' the Church of *England*, as our Saviour charged the *Jewish* Church, had in some Instances preferr'd Humane Inventions to Divine Institutions, and so made void the Commandment of God, her Members might lawfully refuse Compliance therewith; yet they ought notwithstanding to join in all lawful Acts of Communion, after the Example of our Saviour, who lived in constant Communion with the *Jewish* Church, and directed others to do so, till the Law was abolished by his Death, and the Christian Church succeeded in the room of it. *S. Paul's* Rule for preserving Christian Unity is very good, and ought to be observed by us. *Nevertheless wherunto we have attained, let us walk by the same Rule*, Phil. ii. 16.

Page 10. His first Tpoick to shew that the Church of *England* prefers Humane Inventions to Divine Institutions, is this: *We (says he) that scruple God-fathers and God-mothers, which is the Invention of Men, cannot obtain Publick Baptism, which is the Institution of God. Is Publick Baptism the Institution of God? Then how dare this Author, as he frequently does, violate what he here declares to be a Divine Institution, by baptizing in Private, where there is no real Necessity. If the Publick Administration of Baptism be not of Divine Appointment, then they are bound by their own Directory, not to administer Baptism without this Circumstance of Humane Invention. There is another Circumstance of Baptism, viz. the Father's presenting the Child to the Minister, (unless in the Case of necessary Absence) which is as rigorously imposed by the same Directory, as God-fathers in the Church of England; and this is as much a Humane Invention, as Sureties are: If he urges, that it is fitting that the Parent should present his own Child; so we say it is fit there should be Sureties to undertake for the Child. Should Mr. Owen, thinking it most decent and convenient, and pleasing to the greatest Part of his Congregation, resolve to preach always in a black Gown, and from the Pulpit, which are Humane Inventions, he might as well be said to prefer them to Preaching, which is a Divine Institution, as the Church does by insisting upon God-fathers in Baptism,*

tism, because the latter cannot be had without the former. Nor do I think Mr. Owen would change his Habit or Station to gratify a small Part of his Hearers, who should boggle at these Circumstances, especially if he were sure to disoblige the far greatest Part of his Congregation by such a Compliance. The one indeed is a Publick Order of the Church, the other only the Resolution of a Private Teacher, but it is all one in this Case with respect to the People, who cannot have one without the other. That the Church of *England* does not esteem God-fathers or the Cross to be of equal Necessity with Baptism, much less prefers them before it, is plain from thence, that She teaches Baptism to be necessary to all Christians, whereas these Ordinances bind only her own Members, and may (as She declares) upon just Causes be altered and changed: She omits them in the Case of Private Baptism, and yet declares that Baptism to be full, perfect, and sufficient without them. See *Dr. Nichols's Defence of the Church of England*, p. 272.

By the Canon (says this Author) Parents are not allowed to dedicate their own Children, or to promise for their pious Education.

Parents do as properly dedicate their Children, by sending them to the Font, as if they came along with them themselves.

2dly, The Canon does not forbid them to present their Children to the Minister with their own Hands, if they think fit. The Vindicator of *Plain-Dealing* insists upon the contrary, that it is plainly forbid in the latter Part of the 29th Canon. But may not a Parent present his own Child, tho' he does not answer as God-father? I do not see, that this Canon forbids the Parents to promise for the pious Education of their Children, together with the God-fathers, tho' not as a God-father, *Susceptorum loci, &c.* in their Place or Stead. See the Latin Edition.

But before this be made a Pretence for Separation, let them try, if their Parish-Minister refuses to baptize their Children, because the Parents would present them, or promise for them together with God-fathers and God-mothers.

But there is no Footstep for this Practice in the New Testament. It is no where forbidden, and this Author shows, p. 9. That Humane Inventions, as far as they tend to the Benefit of the Church, ought to be comply'd with, especially when enforced by the Civil Power. This is the Case of god-fathers, for it cannot be deny'd, that it is for the good of the Church to provide for the pious Education of her Members, by obliging others to take Care of them in case of the Parent's Decease or Neglect.

Ibid. It is hard (says he) to oblige Men to get Sureties, where every Body may refuse. I answer, that where they cannot be procured, I think myself and all Clergymen at liberty to baptize without them. Cases of Necessity are supposed to be excepted in all Humane Laws about Matters of a positive Nature. Thus where any Person is disabled, by any Infirmary, to kneel at the Sacrament, no Clergyman, I should think, would scruple to administer in another Posture.

Ibid. We must not by the Canons of the Church receive the Lord's Supper, (which is the Institution of God) unless we receive it kneeling, which is the Invention of Man. 'Tis not the Posture, but the Imposition of it upon tender Consciences is blame. Now what Peevishness can be greater than this, when they are commanded to do a Thing by Lawful Authority, to say, they dislike it, or will not communicate with us, because it is commanded. It is just as if a Master of a Family going to Prayer, should order his Servants to kneel down, and one of them should perty answer, truly I find no Fault with Kneeling, but I won't do it, because I am commanded to it. What would such a Servant deserve, that should thus plead for Liberty of Conscience? Mr. Owen says here, We do not blame the Posture of Kneeling, but in the very next Paragraph he retracts that; and says, it is contrary to the Practice of Christ and his apostles, and the Primitive Church: A very bold Assertion! without the least Shadow of Proof.

1. As to the Primitive Christians, I challenge him to prove that ever they received the Sacrament in a common sitting-Posture, or in any other, than what they commonly used in their other Devotions, which was sometimes

times Kneeling, sometimes Standing, especially on *Sabbath days*, and betwixt *Easter* and *Whitsunday*, but never Sitting.

2. It does not appear, that *Christ* and his *Apostles* used the *Sacrament* in a common Eating-Posture. We read, it is true, of the *Disciple* leaning on *Christ's Bosom*, whilst they were eating the *Passover*, but it was after Supper when they proceeded to celebrate the *Lord's Supper*; and tho' the *Scripture* mentions no Change of Posture, we cannot justly infer from thence, that there was no Alteration: It is rather probable, that this more solemn Act was performed by them with greater Reverence.

3. If *Christ* and his *Apostles* had received in a Table-Posture, it is neither necessary nor fitting for us to follow their Example in this Particular. Not necessary, because not commanded; if we were bound to observe the same Circumstances wherein our Saviour administer'd this Sacrament, then ought we to receive it after Supper, and in an upper Room only: Not fitting, because our Saviour is now in different Circumstances, he was then in a State of Humiliation, and used his *Disciples* with greater Familiarity, he is now in a State of Exaltation at God's Right Hand, and ought to be approached by us with a profounder Reverence.

Ibid. We must, if we would be reckon'd true Members of the Church, conform to all the Peculiarities of Unscriptural Forms. By Unscriptural Forms, must be meant either, 1st That Forms of Prayer in general are not warranted by Scripture: Or 2^{dly}, That the particular Form of the Church of *England* is not agreeable to Scripture: Unless he calls our Forms of Prayer unscriptural, because they are not to be found in Scripture Word for Word, and in the same Method, as they are in the *Common-Prayer*, which cannot be said of their own Extemporary Prayers. 1. Forms of Prayer in general are not unscriptural, but warranted by Scripture. *Solomon* prescribed a Form of Confession for Penitents, 1 *King*. viii. 47. and *Dan*. ix. 9. uses the same Form of Words. Many of the *Psalms* were standing Forms of Prayer, and used as such in the Publick Worship of the *Jews*, and our Blessed Saviour and his Disciples

Principles never condemn'd, but join'd in the Use of
 them. Many other Instances might be given of Forms
 of Prayer recorded in Scripture, had I designed a full
 Treatise upon this Subject: But I choose rather to refer the
 Reader, and Mr. Owen, to *Mr. Bennet's History of ser-
 vants of Prayer*, and his *Defense of it*. 2. Our Liturgy in
 particular is agreeable to Scripture. The Substance of it,
 and a great Part of the Expressions are taken from Scrip-
 ture, and if this Author knew of any Part of it, that is
 contrary to Scripture, he has mention'd it, no doubt, in
 the remaining Part of this Discourse, which shall be con-
 sider'd in its due Place.

Page 11. *When a Church deprives Ministers of their inhe-
 rent Power of Church-Government, and the same is devolved
 on Lay-Chancellors, with an Imposition of their being submit-
 ted upon Pain of Excommunication, we may in that Case
 prefer her for a more regular Ministry.*

1. Here is a false Supposition, that the Church de-
 prives Ministers of their inherent Power of Government.
 We own our Church to be defective in Discipline,
 and tho' it were so in this Instance, yet this is not suffi-
 cient to excuse a Separation from Her. No Church upon
 Earth is perfect, and if every Defect in Discipline would
 justify Separation, we should not be bound to hold Com-
 munion with any Church in the World. Lay-Chan-
 cellors in the Church are at least as allowable, as Lay-
 members amongst the Dissenters. 3. No Lay-Member is
 affected by their Spiritual Jurisdiction, till he has ren-
 der'd himself obnoxious by his Contumacy, Fornication,
 or some other grievous Crime; and then it will be time
 enough to separate on that Account, if he can think that
 a justifiable Cause of Separation.

Ibid. The next Fault he finds with the Church, is the
 People's Making Responses, which he calls an *Invasion of
 Ministerial Office*. The People may read the Psalms,
 as well as sing them in Meter. Secondly, The People's
 singing a Part and responding in the Service is warranted
 by Scripture. *Psalms cvi. 48. 2. Chron. vii. 2. Judges xxi. 2.
 1. iii. 16.* In Opposition to which Practice he quotes
*1. Chron. viii. 6. And Esra blessed the Lord God; and all
 the*

the People answered, Amen. And may not this be said of the Church of England, that when the Minister praises God, the People say, *Amen*? Does this in the least contradict any of the fore-mention'd Scriptural Instances? This Custom is both lawful and edifying as it serves to keep up the People's Attention, and to cite a mutual Devotion.

Ibid. He insinuates, *That the Church, instead of Officers, as the Holy Ghost has instituted, appoints a diverse and false Species of Ministers, and imposes them on the Laity on Pretence of a Jure Divino Right, and says, this is a full Imposition; he instances in Bishops as distinct from and superiour to Presbyters and Deacons.*

He that would see the Right of Bishops as distinct from and superiour to Presbyters, fully proved, and the Dissenters Objections against it refuted, may consult, *A brief Account of Church Government in Quarto; printed for B. Tooke, 1685, in Answer to Blondel's Apologia, and the Assembly of Divines, their Jus Divinum, &c. The Bishop of Bangor's Defence of Episcopal Ordination: And Dr. Maurice's Defence of the Diocesan Episcopacy.* I shall only observe at present, that this can be no just Pretence for Separation. 1st, Because a Man may communicate as a Layman, at least in the Church of England, without acknowledging the Divine Right of Episcopacy. 2nd, The Dissenters not only separate from Bishops, but even from Parish-Priests, who by their own Confession are true Ministers.

P. 12. *When a Church intermixes Falshood in her Worship and imposes this Worship as a Term of Communion, it is a Crime to forsake her.* His first Instance is in the Form of Baptism, wherein baptized Persons are said to be regenerate; and in the Church-Catechism, wherein every Child is taught to say, that in Baptism he was made a Member of Christ, and Child of God, which all the World (says he) know to be false in some of their Mouths. 1st, This is the Doctrine of Scripture; Baptism is call'd, Tit. iii. 5. *The Washing of Regeneration.* 1. Cor. xii. 13. *We are all baptized into one Body:* And 1. Pet. iii. 20, 21. *That we are saved by Baptism.* Now, they who are baptized in

Christ, and are saved, that is, put into a State of Salvation, may be truly said to be Members of Christ, and Children of God, tho' they should not always continue to be such.

2dly, What this Author here affirms to be false, is no more than what Dissenting Teachers themselves are bound to subscribe, according to that which is commonly call'd *the Toleration Act*. For in the 27th Article of Religion, which they are bound to subscribe, we have these Words: *They that receive Baptism rightly, are grafted into Christ's Church; the Promises of Forgiveness, and of our Adoption to be the Sons of God, are visibly signed and sealed. This is the Doctrine of the Assembly's Catechism: The Answer there to the Question (What is Baptism?) is this: Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the Washing with Water, &c. doth signify and seal our Ingrafting into Christ, and Partaking of the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace. Are not being made a Member of Christ and Child of God Benefits of the Covenant of Grace?*

Ibid. When a Church obliges Godfathers and Godmothers at Baptism to promise for Children, what no Man can perform for himself; this is an Imposition, which no Man of Thought or Conscience can allow. Mind him; all they, who allow of Godfathers, as he intimates they are used in the Church of England, are Men of no Thought or Conscience. Godfathers promise no more than their Endeavours to lead a Godly and Christian Life; and in the Children's Name, that they will live as becomes Christians; and this sure they may perform with the Grace of God. The Vindicator leaves out these last Words, and then falls foul upon the Curates, for saying that Godfathers promise only their Endeavours to have Children brought up vertuously to lead a Godly and a Christian Life. I appeal to the World if such Plain Dealing be fair Dealing, or not rather Knave-like Dealing.

Ibid. Under this Head of the Church's Intermixing Falshood in her Worship, and imposing that Worship as a Term of Communion, he instances in some Expressions in the Burial Office; charging the Church with Obliging her Clergy to declare their sure and certain Hope of the Salvation

tion of all Persons they bury. The Words in the Office are, *in sure and certain Hopes of the Resurrection*, not in Resurrection, to Eternal Life, and are most properly understood of the general Resurrection, in the same Sense that the Words are used in the Conclusion of the Apostles Creed; nor do the following Words, *Thro' our Lord Jesus Christ*, destroy this Explanation, since thro' Christ we have a more perfect Assurance of it, and it is by his Power, that we shall be raised again. By taking to himself the Soul of our Dear Brother, we do not mean, that he is undoubtedly gone to Heaven, (the Wise Man says of Men in general, *Ecc. xii. 7. That at their Death the Spirit returns to God who gave it*;) but that he has taken it out of this World, and as we charitably hope, of his great Mercy to the Person deceased, or to those who survive him, to be disposed of as he shall think fit. Our Ministers have frequently declared their Construction of these Passages; and Candour and Charity oblige us to take them in the most equitable Sense, that the Words will bear. But after all, I don't apprehend how this can be said to be imposed as a Term of Communion, since the Church no-where obliges those, who boggle at this Office, to go to Burials, or if they do, to join in those Expressions.

P. 12. Moreover, when a Church in her Establish'd Form of Worship lacks humane Indulgences to the Ordinances of Christ, and imposes them on her Members as Parts of those Ordinances, we may justly separate from her. He instances in the Cross in Baptism. Now the Church has declar'd just the contrary in the Rubrick for private Baptism and the thirtieth Canon, That it is no Part of the Substance of this Sacrament, and that Baptism is full, perfect, and sufficient without it. The Vindicator, being some mighty Philosopher, has attempted, with the Help of a little Distinction; to reconcile Mr. Owen's Assertion with the Church's Declaration, he tells us his Meaning was not that the Church imposed the Cross as of the Substance, or an essential Part of Baptism, but only as a necessary Part of it *pro hic & nunc* (as the Schoolmen have it) But Mr. Owen supposes that the Church enjoins the Cross

Part of Christ's Ordinance of Baptism, and whatever is a Part of Christ's Ordinance, or imposed as such, is imposed as of the Substance, or an essential Part of Baptism. Mr. Owen adds, *the Cross is made a Sacrament*: How oft must the Dissenters be told, that the Church does not teach or hold, that the Cross was instituted by Christ, or that it is a Mean of Grace? both which belong to the Definition of a Sacrament even in the *Assemblies Catechism*. The true Reason why the Church does not allow us to administer Baptism or the Lord's Supper in ordinary Cases, without the Cross in one, or kneeling at the other, is not out of an Opinion of the absolute Necessity, but to oblige her Members to comply with her decent and edifying Ordinances. See *Dr. Resbury's Case of the Cross in Baptism amongst the London Cases*.

Ibid. The Clause of Christ's Descent into Hell is in our Apprehension a Falshood.

I desire the Reader to turn to the 13th Page of *Plain Dealing*, 1st Edition, and see if these Words are not to be found there: Because the *Vindicator* P. 15. says, *Mr. Owen does not positively affirm it, nor give his own Opinion in the Case, only says, it is so in the Apprehension of many who dissent from the Church*. Sir Peter King begins his Dissertation upon this Article with these Words: 'We are at length arrived to that famous Article of our Saviour's Descent into Hell, the Truth whereof was never denied or questioned by any; for the Holy Scriptures do so exprelly assert it, especially that Text of S. Peter's, cited from the *Psalmist*, *Thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell*, &c. that, as S. *Austin* affirms, none but an infidel will deny it.' For tho' there are various Interpretations of this Article, I believe Mr. Owen is the first that affirm'd it in general to be false; though he himself had subscribed it, and it is an Article of the Creed, at the End of the *Assemblies Catechism*. The *Vindicator* says, *The Curates don't pretend so much as to offer one Argument, that Christ descended into the Place of the Damned*. Which of the Curates ever affirm'd it? or where does the Church require her Clergy to subscribe it in that Meaning? This is a Continuation of Mr. Owen's Plain Dealing,

Dealing, first to charge a Person with an Opinion he never held, and then abuse him for it.

Ibid. When a Church, in her publick Service, studiously omits Part of the Bible, and in the room of it substitutes meer humane Writings, such as are by herself accounted Apocryphal; which yet the Minister is obliged to read to the People for near two Months together, and that under the Notion of Scripture, &c.

That we may return a full Answer to this Objection, I shall divide it into 3 Parrs. 1st, The Church is blam'd for studiously omitting Part of the Scripture; 2dly, for reading Apocryphal Books; 3dly, for reading them under the Notion of Scripture.

1st, The Church is accused and condemned by the Author, for studiously omitting Part of the Bible. The object, says he P. 15. against the reading of the Apocrypha as excluding so great a Part of the Bible, viz. a great Part of Leviticus, both Books of Chronicles, Nehemiah, Esther, Canticles, Lamentations, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, 2d Epist. to Thess. 2d and 3d Epist. of John, and Revelations, which are of divine Origin, &c.

Here are 13 Books of Scripture, besides Leviticus, Canticles, and Chronicles, which he affirms are excluded by the Apocrypha from being read in the Church of England, whereas in Truth 30, of these Books are ordered to be read throughout in the ordinary Course of Lessons, and a good Part of the other 3. This Author takes amiss, that this Blunder should be charged upon him, after he has confessed his Mistake, and excused it in the later Editions of his Book: But does he think every body is obliged to buy the 2d Edition, who bought the first? or can any one blame us for undeceiving those who might be in danger of being led into an Error by reading the first Impression? The Apology he makes for this Mistake, viz. that he took his Account from Delaune, having no Kalendar by him to consult; shews him to be a very careless Writer, who has quoted the Kalendar ten times in the compass of a Page, P. 14 and by his own Confession, without ever consulting it.

We are told by the *Viridicator*, that some Part of those very Books are actually omitted and superseded by the *Apocrypha*, and that the *Dominical Letter*, *Epistle*, &c. make great Variations in the course of Lessons. I must own, I am so *sorry* vers'd in this kind of Learning, that I cannot perceive how these can make any great Variation in the reading of those Books, which are almost all of them appointed to be read in *August* and the following Months, except it be on *Sundays*, when a proper Lesson out of the Canonical Books is always appointed; or that at any time an Apocryphal takes place of a Canonical Chapter: For the Apocryphal Lessons are only appointed for the immovable Feasts, when there is no other appointed in the ordinary Course of the *Kalendar*: It is ordered that the Lessons in the ordinary Course of the *Kalendar* shall give Place to proper Lessons; but not that proper Lessons for *Sundays* (which are all of them Canonical) shall give Place to the proper Lessons appointed for *Holydays*. I refer the Reader to the *Kalendar* itself, to find what Books are omitted, and what are read in the Church; and, if he would know the Reasons why any are omitted, to Mr. *Bennet's* Paraphrase upon the Common Prayer, P. 251, where he will find a good Account of them, such as I believe Mr. *Owen* is not capable of answering.

After all, the Dissenters have little Reason to object to the Omission of Scripture against the Church, which orders 4 Chapters out of the Canonical Books to be read every *Sunday*, besides Epistles and Gospels, 2 at least upon every *Holyday*, and where they have daily Morning and Evening Prayers, 4 Chapters a Day for the greatest Part of the Year, whereas amongst the Dissenters not above 3 or 4 Chapters are commonly read once a Week. I think I may safely venture to affirm, that the Inhabitants of *Warrington*, where they have Prayers once a Day, and twice upon *Holydays*, have an Opportunity of hearing more Scripture publicly read in one Year in the Church of *England*, than they have amongst the Dissenters in 4 Years.

2dly,

2dly, We are blamed for reading *Apocryphal Books* which (says he) by our own Confession are *non human Writings*. That must be either because nothing ought to be read in the Church but what is divinely inspired which I suppose this Author upon second Thoughts will not affirm; or 2dly, because those Parts which the Church hath made choice of, are not fit to be read. If this were true, I do not see how it would justify a Separation, especially at those Times when none of these Passages are read. But let us consider what Part he finds Fault with, as containing *Falshoods, Errors, and Contradictions*.

P. 14. Septemb. 30. *The 4th and 5th Ch. of Tobit are appointed to be read*. This having passed in several Editions, it was convenient to point out the Mistake of Mr. Owen or the Printer, that the 5th Ch. was read because a stronger Objection lies against this Chapter than any other he has mentioned. In the 4th Ch. we read *Alms deliver from Death*, which does not make Alms to be of themselves meritorious in the Sense of the *Roman Church*; it signifies no more than that God will deliver Charitable Persons from Death, according to *Psal. xli. 12.* tho' it be thro' the Merits of Christ the Alms procure us this Favour.

Ibid. *The Angel directs Tobias to the Use of a Charm to drive away the Devil.*

Our Saviour order'd the blind Man, *Joh. ix. 6.* to anoint his Eyes with Clay, and to wash in the Pool of *Siloam*. It appears from the Tenor of that History, that the Angel designed yet to conceal himself from *Tobias*, and therefore to prevent a Discovery he directed him to the Use of seemingly natural Means.

Ibid. *Tobit 7, and 8. The Angel tells a notorious Lye in declaring himself to be of the Tribe of Naphthali.*

The History does not say that these Words were spoken by the Angel: *Tobias* might, for any thing that appears to the contrary, speak in the Name of them both.

Ibid. *Oct. 3. is read Tob. 11, and 12. The first Objection he makes against these Chapters is frivolous, and rather false; Tobias's Words are, Ch. xi. 14. Blessed art thou*

God, and blessed are all thine holy Angels: And
 iii. 15. will admit of the same Construction with
 iii. 2; 3. The 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, Ch. of *Judith*, are only
 Historical Account of *Judith's* Behaviour. If the
 Stories of good Person's Failings, uncondemned in the
 Story, must not be read, we should for the same Reason
 reject the History of *Jacob's* telling his Father a
 Lye, to gain the Birth-right from his Brother
 Esau; of *Joseph's* calling his Brethren Spies; of the *E-*
gyptian Midwife's preserving the Male-Children; and of
Moses's saving the Spies by a Lye. He says *these Lyes are*
approved by the Author of that Book. Ch. 13, and 14. it
 does not appear that *Ozias* or *Achior* was the Author
 of that Book: Nor does *Ozias*, as the Vindicator af-
 firms, commend *Judith* for Lying, Ch. xiii. 20. for
 there is no mention in the Account which she had
 given him before, of her unlawful manner of deceiving
Holfernes, by telling of Lyes: Suppose he had been
 particularly acquainted with her Methods of Circum-
 vention, yet he might lawfully commend her for slaying
Holfernes, and by that means delivering her distressed Na-
 tion. Many great Actions commended in Scripture had a
 mixture of humane Infirmity in them, and yet the Holy
 Spirit afterwards commended what was good, and overlookt
 what was bad in them. Thus the Author of the Epist. to
Hebrews, Ch. 11. commends the *Egyptian* Midwives
 and *Rahab* the Harlot, the one for saving alive the
 Male-Children, and the other for preserving the *Hebrew*
 Men; it does not follow from hence, that he approves
 of Lyes told by both of them for that Purpose.
 Ibid. Oct. 30. is read *Eccles. 12. where we are for-*
bidden to give Alms to the Ungodly.

The Words, Verse the 4th, are, Give to the godly
 Alms, and help not a Sinner; i. e. Give Alms to the
 godly rather than to a Sinner. This Interpretation will
 be unobscure to those who understand any thing of the
 nature of the *Hebrew* Language, in which it is usual to ex-
 press Comparisons by such *Antitheses*; as *Matth. xix. 13. I*
have Mercy, and not Sacrifice: Which does not for-
 bid

bid Sacrifices, but only prefers Works of Mercy before them.

Ibid. *Of.* 14. is read *Wisdom* iii. and iv. *Where Children born in Bastardy are pronounced hopeless, and their End horrible.*

This Assertion is grounded on the 4 last Verses of the third Chapter, which imply no more, than that God visit the Sins of their Parents upon the Children of Adulterers, that *tho' they live long, yet shall they be notwithstanding, and their last Age shall be without Honour.* Or they die quickly, they have no Hope, that is, as is plain from the preceding Verses, not the Hope or Comfort of leaving a good Reputation behind them; for *horrible the End of the unrighteous Generation*, horrible on the former mention'd Account; or horrible, because of those Verses which the Children of Adulterers commonly fill in thro' the Neglect or evil Examples of their wicked Parents. So that there is no Harm in these Words, when candidly and fairly explained.

Ibid. *Nov.* 6, is read *Ecclus.* xxiv. *where the Wisdom of God is said to be created from the Beginning.*

But this may as well be objected against the Reading of *Proverbs.* See *Chap.* viii. 22, 23, 24 Verses, as of *Ecclesiasticus.*

Ibid. *Nov.* 23. is read the Story of *Bel and the Dragon* where he speaks of *Habbakuk the Prophet in the Days of Cyrus, tho' he prophesied near two hundred Years before Christ's Time.*

According to the Chronology affix'd to the Margin of our Bibles, *Habbakuk* did not prophesy a hundred Years before *Cyrus* began his Reign at *Babylon*; by the Chronological Tables lately publish'd at *Oxford*, which is more exact, there is but seventy three Years difference: But why might there not be two Prophets of the same Name as *Dn Pin H. E.* p. 24. informs us, is reply'd by way of Answer to this Objection.

Thus have I endeavour'd to vindicate those Passages in the Apocryphal Books, which *Mr. Owen* objects against as absurd and unfit to be read in Churches, which I have not done to raise them to an equal Credit and Authority.

which undoubted Scripture ; but to shew that there is nothing absurd in these Passages, since the same Objections are for the most part against Parallel Places in God's Word. I thought this the concise Way of answering them.

3dly, That the Church requires her Clergy to read Apocryphal Books under the Notion of Scripture. I believe he can name no Clergyman that reads them under that Notion, and the Church is so far from requiring it, that in the 6th Article of Religion, she distinguishes them from Canonical Books ; and lest any Layman should mistake them, they are distinguish'd in the Bible by the Word *Apocrypha* on the Top of the Leaf ; and if this be not sufficient, the Minister may say before he reads them, *He beginneth such a Chapter of such an Apocryphal Book.*

He concludes this Section with some Quotations out of Mr. Chillingworth. I wish our Dissenters were of the same Opinion, it makes so directly against them, that I cannot forbear repeating the first of them after this Author. *May a Church be left for Sin and Error ? No, if she will not impose and enjoin 'em, but if she do, (as the Roman Church) then we must leave the Church's Communion rather than commit Sin.* It is the Judgment of this Learned Man, that no Church should retain Sin and Errors, yet she is not to be left for that Reason, unless she impose them on her Members, as the Church of Rome does ; and that nothing under a Necessity of Sinning can justify Separation. We come now to his second Proposition, p. 16.

No doubtful Things imposed by any Church ought to be comply'd with ; because, says he, the Scriptures tell us, what is not of Faith, is Sin ; if the Things be dubious, nobody can blame us for refusing to subscribe them. Nor does the Church require any to subscribe them besides the Clergy, so that notwithstanding any Thing objected under this head, every Dissenter is bound to conform as a Layman, so he cannot subscribe to some Things which he apprehends to be doubtful in the Church : If he adds, neither ought he to do any Thing whilst he is doubtful concerning it, we shall enquire how far this is to be allow'd. A Man is said to be doubtful, when he is divided betwixt

two Opinions : Now to state the Case clearly, we must take Notice of two sorts of doubtful Cases. 1. Where a Person doubts only concerning the Lawfulness of any Thing, but is at that time persuaded of the Lawfulness of taking a contrary Course. This was the Case of some Christians amongst the *Romans*, about the eating of Meat forbidden by the Law of *Moses*; they were persuaded there was no Harm in forbearing to eat, there being no Law commanding them to eat; but they were doubtful whether they were not obliged to refrain from them; in which Case *S. Paul* told them, *he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, and whatever is not of Faith is Sin*; i. e. whoever a Man does whilst he doubts of its Lawfulness, he knows at the same time that he may Lawfully let it alone, it is Sin, because he runs a needless Hazard of breaking God's Command.

2. Where Arguments of equal Weight offer themselves for both Sides, and a Person doubts as much whether he may Lawfully forbear, as whether he may Lawfully do any Thing, the Rule, *whatever is not of Faith, is Sin*, does not take place, because according to this Rule, he would be under a Necessity of Sinning, which way soever he took: In this Case he may choose the safer Part, because it is all one, as to the Hazard of offending God, which he makes Choice of.

Much less Reason is there to infer from the Apostolic Rule, (*whatever is not of Faith, is Sin*) as this Author does; that a Man would sin by observing some Thing enjoined in the Church of *England*, because he is doubtful only, whether there be an express Command of God for them: If he be convinced of their Lawfulness, that they are not contrary to any Divine Precept, tho' not of their Necessity; that is, a sufficient Warrant for his Compliance, for *where there is no Law, there is no Transgression*. The Authority of Governors, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, would signify nothing, if a meer Doubt or Scruple concerning the Divine Institution of their particular Order, would excuse Disobedience, or make Obedience no Duty. See *Dr. Sharp's Discourses upon Conscience*, and *Dr. Calamy upon a scrupulous Conscience*.

thought the *London Cases*, or *Mr. Bennet's Assignments* of them.

Let us examine the Reasons he alledges for their doubting about several Things in the Church.

1st. They doubt, whether the Lord's Prayer was designed for a Standing Form. The Reasons for this Doubt are commonly the three following, tho' this Author only mentions the two last of them, *P. 17.*

1. The Apostles never used it as a Form: How do they know that? We don't read in Scripture, that the Apostles ever baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but it does not follow from thence, that they never used that Form in Baptism.

2. They object, that the Name of Christ is not express'd in it, which, says Mr. Owen, is an *Essential Part of an acceptable Prayer*. Then, supposing it only a Direction how to pray, according to this Author, our Saviour did not direct his Disciples how to pray in an acceptable Manner. A Prayer may be offer'd in the Name of Christ, tho' it be not expressly named, and it is thro' our Adoption in Christ, that we call God, *Our Father*. There is no express Mention of the Name of Christ in the Apostle's Prayer, *Act. i. 24.* their Prayer was not surely for that Reason unacceptable.

3. His last Reason is, the Variety of Expression in this Prayer, as it is deliver'd by the two *Evangelists*. But tho' there be some little Variety of Expression in the Body of the Prayer, which might proceed from the different Languages in which the two *Evangelists* wrote, the Sense is the same in both. No more can be reasonably infer'd from S. Luke's omitting the Doxology, than that we are at Liberty to use this Prayer with or without it.

The plain Command of our Saviour, *When ye pray, say Our Father, &c.* and the Occasion of it, which was a Request of his Disciples, to teach them to pray, as S. John taught his Disciples a Form of Prayer; See *Assembling Annotations on Luk. xi. 1.* and as it was usual with the Jewish Doctors to teach their Disciples a short Form of Prayer; See *Lightfoot's Harmony*, Sect. LX. p. 245. are fair Proofs, that our Saviour intended the Lord's Prayer

to be a Standing Form, to be used as a Badge of that Discipleship.

Page 17. *Some scruple the dammatory Clause in the Athanasian Creed.* But this Author surely did scruple it much, when he subscribed the 8th Article of Religion; which is, *the three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostle's Creed, ought to be thoroughly received and believed.*

Ibid. *It is Matter of Offence, that Women bear a Share in the Publick Service, contrary to S. Paul's Injunction, 1 Cor. xiv. 34.* Singing Psalms is as much a Breach of this Injunction, as Womens saying the Responses. The true Meaning of this Precept, is, that Women should not speak by way of Preaching or Prophecyng, *docendi et prophetandi causa*, as Calvin explains the Text. And in the following Verses, they are forbid to ask Questions in the Church for the sake of Information. But this is nothing to the Purpose of their making orderly Responses.

Ibid. *Some question the Truth of the Rubrick at the Close of Publick Baptism.* No Layman is bound to declare his Consent to it, and therefore this can be no Pretence for Separation. It has been already proved, that Children are Partakers of the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace by Baptism, and it is impossible they should forfeit them, before they commit actual Sin.

Ibid. *The Office of Matrimony needs no Justification, since the Dissenters make no Scruple of complying with that Office, for the sake of a handsome Wife, and a good Fortune.*

As to the Bishops saying in Confirmation, that they lay Hands on Children, *after the Example of the Holy Apostles.* The Words are appropriated to the Bishops, who are able to justify the Expression; the Congregation is not to join even mentally in that Prayer, but to say Amen at the End of it, which implies only, that God would grant what the Bishop pray'd for. To say that the Church herself condemns her own Confirmation, by calling it in the 25th Article, *A corrupt following of the Apostles Practice*, where she speaks of Confirmation, as used in the

the Church of Rome, is a notorious Falsification, and deserves a harder Name, than I am willing to give it.

Fig. 18. *Indifferent Terms of Communion, when rigorously and universally imposed, are not allowable, nor to be complied with in all Cases.* This Meaning in these Words, and the Explanation of them, I take to be this; that the Dissenters are justifiable in separating from us, because the Church enjoins the Use of some things, not particularly commanded by God, as a Term of Communion. This he endeavours to prove from *Math. xv. 2.* Dr. *Whisby* upon these Words has return'd a very satisfactory Answer to this Objection; for having shewn in what Sense the Jews held the Tradition of washing of Hands before Meat, he concludes; 'Thus have you seen, how the Pharisees taught these Commandments of Men for Doctrines, i. e. Things necessary to be believed and done, and Parts of God's Worship; and so how free the Ceremonies of the Church of England must be from this Guilt, they being reckon'd not as necessary, but in themselves things indifferent; not used for Sanctification, but only for Order and Decency; not reckon'd as any Parts, but only Circumstances of Worship.' See *Bishop Sanderson's Sermon on Matth. xv.*

From what Dr. *Whisby* has said upon these Words, it appears, that the true Reason of our Saviour and his Apostles not complying with this Tradition, was not because the Church had assumed a Power of imposing things unrequir'd by God's Word, for our Saviour submitted to several injunctions of that kind, (*viz.* in observing the Feast of Dedication, in complying with their Synagogue Worship, and their Posture of eating the Passover) but because they were taught as Doctrines, or the Commandments of God. 2dly, Either Washing of Hands was deemed a religious Ceremony, or it was not; if it was not, it is impertinently urged in this Place; if it was, then Dissenters are obliged, after the Example of our Saviour, to join with us in the publick Worship of God, notwithstanding any such Impositions, so far, at least, as they may, without complying with what they imagine to be such Impositions.

Ibid.

Ibid. It is certain, says he, *Christ and his Apostles are against imposing indifferent things; from Acts xv. 8.*

The Question debated at this Meeting of the Apostles, was, whether the *Gentile Converts* were bound to be circumcised, and to observe the Law of *Moses*; and the Resolution was, that they should be bound to observe much of it, as to abstain from Fornication, Blood, and things strangled. This is so far from being an Argument that the Apostles were against imposing indifferent things, that it is an Instance of their imposing them; for such is abstaining from Blood, and things strangled: And if any separated from their Communion on such Account, I presume, he would have been guilty of Schism and of Disobedience, if he neglected to observe that Order.

Page 19. His next Objection against commanding indifferent things is taken from the Apostles Direction given to the Primitive Christians, concerning the Use of some things not commanded by any Law then in Force, as the observing *Jewish* Holy-days, and the Eating or Refraining from some particular Sorts of Meat. The principal Rule for their Behaviour was, that they should have a charitable Respect to others, and to do nothing that would provoke them to think the worse of Christianity, or that might be a *Stumbling-Block* to a weak Brother. The Rule in this Case was the same as to eating or not eating, if the Company they were in were likely to think the worse of their Religion for their eating *Flesh*, *it is good not to eat.* Rom. xiv. 21. On the other hand, if refusing to eat some particular Meat would give the like Offence; then, *whatsoever is sold in the Shambles, that eat, asking no Questions for Conscience sake.* 1. Cor. x. 29. And this is the Liberty St. Paul asserts, 1. Cor. vi. 12. That he would not be so enslaved to any particular Meat, or other indifferent Matter, as not to be at Liberty to use or refrain from it, as Charity required. This Case is not parallel to that of the Dissenters, with respect to the Ceremonies of the Church: Those indifferent Things remain still so, both in their own Nature, and in their Use, being commanded by no Law in Force; our Ceremonies are commanded by lawful Authority; and our Disobedience would

ould give greater Offence, than our Compliance does: Moreover, Dissenters are obliged to comply with our Ceremonies for this very reason, lest they should give Offence by their obstinate Refusal, and Disturbance of the Church's Peace, which we find in Fact to be a great stumbling-block to Papists and Infidels: And they are much more properly said to be brought under the Power of indifferent Things, who think it unlawful to observe them, than they who think they are bound to observe them because they are commanded by their Superiors. See Bp. Williams's Case of indifferent Things amongst the London Cases.

Page 20. It was some time (says he) before the Use of indifferent Things crept into the Church, The Primo-primitive Church did not impose them as necessary Terms of Communion. By indifferent Things are meant, such as are not commanded by God, or as this Author defines them, any thing that is not in its own Nature necessary, antecedent to its Imposition. Such indifferent Things were ordered by the Apostles themselves, and used even in their Days: As their Charity Feasts, Women's wearing long hair, and Men short, 1 Cor. xi. The Abstaining from meat and Things strangled, Dipping in Baptism, &c. I do not see how Christians could in those Times receive the Lord's Supper without joining in the Charity Feast, or be baptized without Dipping: This last Custom was rigorously impos'd in the Primo-primitive Church, at the 2d or 3d Age a Clergyman was to be depos'd by the Canons of the Church, that administred Baptism without trine Immersion. He that would know the Custom of the Primitive Church, with respect to such indifferent Things, may consult the Apostolical and Nicene Canons, if he understands not the Original, translated into English, in the 2d Vol. of the Clergyman's Plea Meum; and he shall find a great Part of those Canons enjoining Things in their own Nature indifferent, some of them to Clergymen under the Penalty of Suspension, and to Laymen, of Excommunication: Before this Author objects against the Former, I desire him to consider what has been said by Bp. Beveridge in their Defence, in his *Codex Canonum Pindicatus*,
E and

and not, according to his usual way of Writing, consider up old Objections without taking Notice of the Answers that have been made to them.

Ibid. In the next Place (he says) Separation is lawful in a Political Sense, when allow'd by the Government. His Meaning in these Words I take to be this, that this Separation is no Breach of the Laws of the Land, because of the *Act of Exemption*, commonly, but improperly, called *The Toleration Act*. 1st. No humane Law can alter the Nature of Schism, so as to make causeless Separation no Sin. 2dly, That the Government, by the Laws of the Land, no more allow them to separate than to tell Lyes, because they do not punish a common Lye, which is the only Reason that can be given for this supposed Allowance. In Laws not purely Penal there are two Parts; the Preceptive, that which commands us to do a Thing, and the Sanction or Punishment which it threatens to the Disobedient: Now the *Act of Exemption* or *Toleration* only abrogates the latter Part of the *Act of Uniformity*; that Part of the Act which commands us to join with the Church of England, is still in Force, tho' the Punishment for neglecting to do it is taken off: And if our Superiors require us to do a Thing lawful in itself, suppose a Parent his Child, he would be bound in Conscience to observe it, tho' he should not threaten to punish him for his Neglect. 3dly, This Act, as it's Title declares, was designed only for scrupulous Consciences, and therefore none ought to claim the Benefit of it, but such as scruple the Lawfulness of coming to Church. Vid. *Mr. Norris's Charge of Schism continued*.

We are come now to his 2d Ch. which contains some general Reasons to clear Dissenters from the Charge of Schism.

P. 22. 1st, *We are not Schismatics from the Catholick Church, nor any true visible Part of her; our Assembly having all that's essential to the Being of a true Church*. Now supposing, which is not allow'd, that the Dissenters have a true Ministry: I shall prove by one or two allow'd Instances of Schismatics, that there may be a Schism from the Catholick Church by a Party that

agrees with her in all Essentials of Faith, Doctrine, and Worship, except their separating from her Communion. The *Novatians* and *Donatists*, were esteem'd Schismatics, and condemned as such by the Catholick Church, the former for setting up *Novatianus* against *Cornelius* Bp. of Rome, and the latter for setting up *Majorinus* against *Cassilian* Bp. of Carthage, and refusing Communion with the latter and his lawful Successors, tho' they had both a true Ministry, and all that was essential and necessary in the Being of a true Church. If there be no Schism where all Sides were agreed about Essentials, then there is no difference betwixt Schismatics and Hereticks, a Distinction that was always allow'd.

P. 23. *Neither are we in reality Schismatics from the English Church.* Because, according to Mr. *Chillingworth*, a Man may possibly leave some Opinion or Practice of a Church, and yet continue a Member of that Church: True, so a Man may be a Member of the Church of England, tho' he does not agree to all her Doctrines, nor observe all her Injunctions; but it does not follow from hence, that they who renounce her Authority and Communion are still her Members.

Ibid. By the the 11th Canon (says he) *We are allow'd to be true Churches.* Whereas that Canon flatly condemns all who affirm'd or maintain'd any other Assemblies to be true and lawful Church, except those that were then held and allow'd by the Laws of the Land, which were only those of the Church of England: He might as well say *Quakers* are allow'd by the Canon, as *Presbyterians*, to be true Churches.

We are a true Church (says he) by the 19th Article, which defines it to be, *A Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administred in all things essential to the same.* But in the Judgment of the Church, the Sacraments are not thus administred amongst the Dissenters; for it is her Opinion, that none can administer the Sacraments but such as are lawfully sent to execute the same; and in her Opinion, none but Bishops have Power to ordain or

send into the Lord's Vineyard ; she does not allow persons ordained by meer Priests to be lawfully sent.

Ibid. The Terms of Communion are of Man's Making, and whether the Church has first Power to make a Sin, and then to make it damnable, he thinks very questionable.

It is not the Church but the Law of God that makes Disobedience to Church-Governors a Sin, *Heb.* xiii. 17. he might for the same Reason conclude it to be no Sin to transgress the Commands of his civil Government, when they require any thing not expressly commanded in God's Word.

P. 24. We do not separate for Separation sake, but are driven out by Oaths, Subscriptions, Declarations, Statutes, &c. This Pretence cannot justify the Separation of any Layman, who are not bound to take any Oaths, which this Author objects against, or to make Subscriptions or Declarations.

The 14 following Pages contain a Charge of Schism against both the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England, and some others, who, says he, according to our way of arguing, are equally Schismatics with themselves. I take this to be the Sum of his Argument. ' If we be Schismatics for disobeying the Church's Orders, so are the 4 Sorts of Persons he mentions ; notwithstanding which, if they be no Schismatics, no more are we, for the same Reason.

Pag. 25 1st, As to the Episcopal Men in Scotland, &c. as this Author intimates, they separate from the Kirk only because they'll not take the Oaths, or pray for a Revolution Government, I agree with this Author that their Separation is Schismatical, because they both might and ought to continue Members of the Kirk, though they could do neither ; but if they deny the Ministry of the Kirk to be true Ministers for want of Episcopal Ordination, our English Dissenters have not that to urge in their Justification ; since they allow us to have a true Ministry, and all our Parish Priests, from whom they separate, to have as good a Ministerial Commission as their own Teachers.

P. 26. 2dly, The Generality of Nonjurors, tho' they are restrain'd from Officiating as Ministers, yet they are not excluded the Church, as he affirms, for, as they think themselves bound, they do constantly communicate with us, and have not set up separate Congregations, except some few, who for that Reason are Schismatics as well as other Dissenters.

3dly, As to *Dutch and French Churches in London*, it is but reasonable that Foreigners who reside there should have an Opportunity of Worshipping God in a Language which they best understand; but if they should hold the Communion of the Church of *England* unlawful, and should endeavour to make Proselytes from her, or do any thing in opposition to the Establish'd Church-Government, they would be guilty of Schism.

P. 27. 4thly, He argues that Churchmen, both Clergy and Laity, must be equally guilty of Schism with the Dissenters, because they do not observe the Rules of the Church, and differ from one another in several Modes of Worship. To which I answer. That we do not call the Dissenters Schismatics for not strictly observing every particular *Canon and Rubrick* of the Church, or because they differ from one another in Doctrines and Practices undetermin'd by her Authority, but for rejecting the Authority of her Governors, setting up distinct Congregations and hearing to themselves Teachers in Opposition to their lawful Ministers. It does not follow because Schism is an Act of Disobedience, that therefore every Act of Disobedience must be Schism: We will suppose a Person accused of Rebellion, pretending himself after this manner; 'you call me a Rebel and a Traitor for taking up Arms against the Government, contrary to some Statutes in that Case made and provided, but if I be accounted a Rebel for breaking the Laws of the Land, you are all Rebels for the same Reason, for there are many Acts of Parliament which you yourselves do not observe. If this would be no justifiable Plea for a Rebel, neither can it be a just Excuse for Separation, to say this Church-

Churchmen do not observe the Injunctions of their Church.

We must own to our Shame, that our Canons and Rubricks are too much neglected by ourselves, and I wish this heavy Charge may be a Caution to mind them more strictly for the future, and not to dispense with them, as is usual, out of Compliance with Dissenters, who it seems are so far from being gained to the Church, that they are harden'd thereby in their Separation. The Reasons of some of those Orders are entirely ceased, and their Obligation worn off, thro' a long Disuse and universal Connivance of our Superiors, others are capable of a different or more favourable Construction than this Author has given them; and we are unjustly blamed by him (P. 37) for using our own Discretion in a decent Manner in some Things, which are neither forbidden nor commanded. And tho' great Numbers of us are justly chargeable with some of those Instances of Disobedience, yet this is no Reason for their Separation from us. It might easily be made out, that the Practice of Dissenters does not agree with their own Directory in all Particulars; but I leave this to their Observation, who think it worth their while to examine and compare them together.

Pag. 37. We are agreed, that there may be a Schism in a Church without a Separation from it, which happens when there are hot Contentions and Animosities among the Members of it, join'd with a Breach of Charity; or when they wilfully refuse Communion with one another in the Publick Ordinances of Religion, 1 Cor. i. and in Chapters. But it does not follow from hence, that such a Separation is no Schism? Or that if any of those Corinthians had set up distinct Congregations, they would have been less, or not more guilty of Schism. The Word Schism signifies Division, and all Divisions, that disturb the Peace and Order of the Church are condemn'd in Scripture by that Name.

Who they are, that damn all Protestants, Domestic and Foreign, that are not of their Denomination, I know not; for my own Part, I think no one will be damn'd at the last Day for any Errors which are not wilful; and I

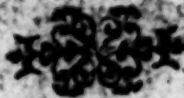
that those Errors wilful only, which may be avoided by an impartial and diligent Enquiry, according to Mens various Capacities and Opportunities.

I have now finished my Examination of *Plain Dealing*, and do not know that I have in any Particular misrepresented Mr. *Owen's* Meaning, or over-looked any Thing that has been urged by him, with the least Shadow of Reason, in Defence of Separation from the Establish'd Church. I desire the Reader, however, to compare both together, that he may be able to form a right Judgment of our Performance.

I shall conclude with a brief Exhortation to the Dissenters. That they would consider in the first place, if they are not bound to join in Communion with the Establish'd, if they could do it Lawfully, and with a safe Conscience: The evil Consequences of having different Communions amongst us, the Weaking of the Government and Protestant Interest, and the great Offence given to Papists and Infidels, by our unhappy Religious Disorders, if there were no other Arguments to enforce it, are sufficient; one would think, to induce any good Christian to avoid all needless Division, and to comply, as far as possible, even for Peace sake. If you are satisfied, that you would be obliged to conform, if you might do it with a safe Conscience, as your Teachers generally allow in their Publick Writings, and Mr. *Owen*, p. 24. says, *You would gladly do at any rate, but the Expence of Conscience and Truth*; I beseech you to enquire impartially of the Lawfulness of the Things commanded in the Church of *England*, not to believe every Thing that is charged upon the Church by its Adversaries; but to examine both whether it be true in Fact, and whether it be not harmless in itself, according to the equitable Construction, which our Clergy, who are the properest Judges of their own Meaning, put upon it. Our Ceremonies, which you chiefly object against, are few, and no Hindrance to true Devotion, they are, by the Confession of all Sides, Things in their own Nature indifferent, that is, neither commanded nor forbidden by the Law of God; so that there can be no Harm, at least, in
your

your Compliance. There is not a Nation in the World, that does not oblige its Members to some such indifferent Things; the English are the greatest Part of Foreign Protestants, but more than we do; and upon this Principle, commencing indifferent Things in the World, makes it unlawful to hold Communion with any Church in the World. Perhaps you cannot be reconciled to some Things which Clergymen are bound to swear or subscribe, but you ought not to believe, that they are satisfied in their Consciences of their Lawfulness at least: And these Things are not required of you, they are only a Pretence for your Separation: Suppose some Things, which Clergymen only are bound to (as they are) justifiable in themselves, you are to refuse Communion with them on that Account. Saviour, you know, lived in constant Communion with the Jewish Church, tho' he did not approve of many condemn'd, as vain and sinful, many Things were taught and done by Scribes and Pharisees. I shall add, that you are condemn'd by all Protestant Churches for your leaving our Communion. you may see in *Dodd's Book of Foreign Churches* and *Mr. Testaments*: And conclude with a *Second Calvin's Exposition*, Lib. IV. Chap. 1. Sect. 2.

- * Lord has so great a Regard to the Communion
- * Church, that he accounts him an Apostate
- * *such & desecrate Religions*, who obstinately
- * from any Christian Society, that keeps up the
- * nistry of the Word and Sacraments, and calls
- * tion from such a Church a *Denial of God and*
- * *Self*. XII. that the Communion of such ought
- * rejected, tho' it abound with many Faults.



F I N I S.